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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Guatemala	REPORT NO.	
SUBJECT	Communist Reaction to Beriya Downfall	DATE DISTR.	17 August 1953
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1. Spanish Communists in Guatemala at first refused to believe the news of the downfall of Lavrentiy Beriya in the USSR. Only when assured that the news had been heard on a London broadcast, which gave Moscow radio as the source, did they apparently accept it as the truth. Antonio DURANTE was the first to react, and stated that Beriya was plainly a traitor and a Trotskyist "like Andre Marty in France, and Jesus HERNANDEZ Tomas in Spain."¹
2. Other Spanish Communists in the group held slightly different viewpoints, arguing that the matter was not quite the same, since Beriya had been the companion and right arm of Stalin, and a leading figure in world Communism. All in the group appeared greatly affected, mainly because they had been certain that, when Stalin died, no internal strife would occur among the leaders of the Soviet. Until the Party line was ascertained they scarcely wanted to discuss the matter, and limited themselves to saying that no doubt Beriya wanted to retain power and was acting honestly, believing he was better qualified than Malenkov and the others. All supported the Moscow line when it became known.
3. Similar reactions were reported among Guatemalan Communists. Jose Manuel FORTUNY promptly stated that Beriya was a vile traitor, and that his capture without incident spoke well for the strength of the Party in the USSR. Victor Manuel GUTIERREZ and Alfredo GUERRA Borges limited themselves to listening.

- 25X1A 1. Comment. Although Andre Marty was expelled for deviation from the French Communist Party, there is no indication that he has allied himself to the Fourth International (Trotskyists). Jesus HERNANDEZ Tomas was expelled from the Spanish Communist Party and is generally regarded as being pro-Tito.

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